

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05
USSS-00 SSM-05 /090 W
-----087855 291126Z /12

O 291020Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3885
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NY
USMISSION SINAI

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: IS
SUBJ: ISRAELI PRESS REACTION WESTERN WALL VISIT CONTROVERSY

1. ISRAELI PRESS JUNE 29 HIGHLIGHTS COMPROMISE SOLUTION
CONCERNING VP MONDALE'S VISIT TO WESTERN WALL.
IN HEADLINE STORIES THE JERUSALEM POST (BLITZER) AND AL
HAMISHMAR (SHEHORI) BOTH QUOTE A JUNE 28 STATEMENT ISSUED BY
THE VP'S OFFICE. BLITZER AND HAARETZ (MARCUS)
REPORT THAT OFFICIALS WITH THE VP SAID AT A
BRIEFING, "OUR POLICY ISNT BEING CHANGED. IT CONTINUES
TO BE WHAT IT HAS BEEN."

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2. GOI OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY REACTED WITH SATISFACTION TO
THE LAST MINUTE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF THE WALL
VISIT. THEY SAID THE VP'S DECISION
HAD EFFECTIVELY REMOVED WHAT COULD HAVE BECOME
A CLOUD OVER THE ENTIRE VISIT. RECOGNIZING THAT THE VP'S
VISIT TO THE WALL WOULD STILL BE CLASSIFIED AS PRIVATE, THEY
REPORTEDLY SAID, "WE COULD HARDLY HAVE EXPECTED TO BREAK

THE AMERICAN POSITION" OF NON-RECOGNITION OF EAST JERUSALEM AS PART OF ISRAEL. WITH RESPECT TO THE QUESTION OF LIMOUSINE FLAGS, GOI OFFICIALS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE INDICATED EARLIER THIS WEEK THAT THEY WOULD DEMAND THAT THE FLAGS REMAIN ON THE LIMOUSINE WHILE IT WAS IN EAST JERUSALEM. HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF THE COMPROMISE SOLUTION ANNOUNCED BY THE VP'S OFFICE, THE ISSUE OF FLAGS IS EXPECTED TO BE ALLOWED TO FADE. DAVAR (BLOCH) REPORTS THAT IN THE PM'S OFFICE, MAYOR TEDDY KOLLEK OF JERUSALEM WAS HIGHLY PRAISED FOR HIS PROUD AND COURAGEOUS STAND ON THE ISSUE. BLOCH ALSO WRITES THAT IN THE COURSE OF AMB LEWIS' TALK WITH PM BEGIN JUNE 28, BEGIN EMPHASIZED THE GRAVITY WITH WHICH ISRAEL VIEWED A MONDALE VISIT TO THE WALL WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL ESCORT. LATER, BLOCH SAYS, THE VP PHONED THE AMB AND ASKED HIM TO CALL KOLLEK TO INVITE HIM TO ACCOMPANY VP ON THE VISIT.

3. MAYOR KOLLEK'S REACTION TO THE COMPROMISE IS ALSO REPORTEDLY FAVORABLE. HE ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT THE VP'S INVITATION TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE WALL, AND HE DECLARED THE CRISIS OVER THE MONDALE VISIT OVER. "I WAS JUST TRYING TO EXPRESS A PROTEST AGAINST AN UNNECESSARY INSULT," KOLLEK REPORTEDLY SAID OF HIS BOYCOTT WARNING. "THE INSULT HAS NOW BEEN REMOVED. THIS COULD HAVE BEEN SOLVED AMICABLY BEFORE IT BECAME AN ISSUE. IF IT HAD BEEN ARRANGED FOR ME TO RECEIVE HIM AT

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THE ENTRANCE TO THE CITY WITH BREAD AND SALT, THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT. I WOULD HAVE BROUGHT JEWS AND ARABS AND REPS OF OTHER COMMUNITIES. THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN THOUGHT OF BEFORE HIS VISIT WAS ANNOUNCED." ASKED WHETHER WASHINGTON'S EMPHASIS ON THE PERSONAL NATURE OF THE INVITATION DID NOT NEGATE ANY RECOGNITION OF HIM AS MAYOR OF JERUSALEM, HE SAID, "VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE DIDNT MAKE ME THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM, ONLY THE CITIZENS OF JERUSALEM DID."

4. THE POST (RABINOVICH) SEES THE COMPROMISE FORMULA PROPOSED BY WASHINGTON AS PERMITTING A FACE-SAVING DETOUR AROUND A DIPLOMATIC CONFRONTATION THAT NEITHER SIDE WANTED. WHILE WASHINGTON CAN NOW STRESS THE PERSONAL AND NON-POLITICAL NATURE OF THE VP'S VISIT TO THE WALL WITH HIS "FRIEND" MAYOR TEDDY KOLLEK, JERUSALEM CAN SATISFY ITSELF THAT KOLLEK'S PRESENCE IN ITSELF IS AN UNDENIABLE POLITICAL FACT. IN AN EDITORIAL DAVAR WRITES THAT HAD MONDALE'S ADVISERS NOT MISTAKEN THE SHADOWS OF MOUNTAINS FOR REAL MOUNTAINS, THE VP'S VISIT TO THE WESTERN WALL, ESCORTED BY THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM, WOULD HAVE HAD NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. WHAT COULD BE MORE

NATURAL, DAVAR ASKS, THAN FOR THE VP TO VISIT
THE WALL IN THE COMPANY OF MAYOR KOLLEK? HE HAS AFTER ALL,
ESCORTED MR MONDALE BEFORE, AND AT A TIME WHEN BOTH WERE
ELECTED OFFICIALS. FURTHERMORE, DAVAR ARGUES, THE US
VP CAN SURELY DO WHAT THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT
HAS DONE. DAVAR DEFENDS MAYOR KOLLEK'S STAND ON THE ISSUE,
ASSERTING THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE GOI COULD HAVE REACTED
OTHERWISE. ALTHOUGH DAVAR SEES THE COMPROMISE AS AN EMER-
GENCY SOLUTION, IT FINDS IT ACCEPTABLE NONETHELESS. NEITHER
SIDE SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN CREATING ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS
FOR THE OTHER, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE MAIN OBJECT OF THE
VP'S VISIT IS TO DEMONSTRATE THE GOOD WILL OF
THE GREATEST OF DEMOCRACIES TOWARD THE ONLY DEMOCRACY IN
THE MIDDLE EAST.
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5. AL HAMISHMAR CONCLUDES THAT ACCORDING TO POLITICAL CIRCLES, THE ENDLESS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND JERUSALEM OVER THIS ISSUE HAS LEFT A CERTAIN TASTE OF BITTERNESS WHICH COULD OVERSHADOW THE SUCCESS OF THE VP'S VISIT. AND THIS, SHEHORI ADDS, AT A TIME WHEN THERE IS ALREADY TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN VIEW OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S "GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT" AT ISRAEL'S POSITIONS.

6. IN AFTERNOON EDITORIALS JUST RECEIVED YEDIOT AND MA'ARIV BOTH EXPRESS DISMAY OVER THE CONTROVERSY. YEDIOT CONGRATULATES MAYOR KOLLEK FOR HIS FIRM STAND, ASSERTING THAT IF THE VP WAS PLANNING TO COME TO ISRAEL TO HUMILIATE
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THE CITIZENS OF JERUSALEM BY DEMONSTRATING HIS OPPOSITION TO THE CITY'S UNIFICATION, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD HE NOT COME AT ALL. MA'ARIV CALLS THE COMPROMISE "BOTH FAIR AND LAME," EQUALLY SATISFYING AND DISAPPOINTING TO BOTH SIDES. THE GOI, MA'ARIV ASSERTS, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO AGREE TO OMITTING EAST JERUSALEM FROM THE VP'S ITINERARY. THE "JERUSALEM INCIDENT" IS ALL THE MORE DISCONCERTING SINCE IT INVOLVES A US STATESMAN WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS STAUNCH PRO-ISRAEL STANDS. IN SPITE OF THE COMPROMISE, THE CONTROVERSY WILL STILL HANG OVER THE VISIT LIKE A DARK CLOUD. IT MIGHT BE ADVISABLE, MA'ARIV CONCLUDES, TO COMPROMISE ISRAELI RESPONSE TO THE VISIT AS WELL -- SOMEWHERE BETWEEN EXCESSIVE ENTHUSIASM AND VARIOUS THREATS TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE VP.
FULL TEXTS OF EDITORIALS FOLLOW. LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, VISITS, PLACES OF WORSHIP
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV08180
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780269-0100
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978066/aaaaaery.tel
Line Count: 206
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e9593289-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2352273
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI PRESS REACTION WESTERN WALL VISIT CONTROVERSY
TAGS: SOPN, OVIP, IS, (MONDALE, WALTER F)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e9593289-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014